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## My Favorite Perfins – Part VIII

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This issue of my favorite and most unusual U.S. perfins discusses the area of Schermack perfins, which was an important portion of the display at the 2008 St. Louis convention. This will be the last in this series of articles.

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, sheets of imperforate stamps were sold to private firms who then cut the sheets into strips, pasting them together as coil strips for their stamp vending machines. They added distinct private perforations to these strips, which are documented in the *Scott's Specialized Catalog of US Stamps*. One of the more well-known of these vending machine companies is the Schermack Company of Detroit, Michigan, who purchased the Mailometer Company. These private coils are very collectable philatelic items, with or without perfins.

We are interested in these stamps obviously because perfin patterns were added to some. Although quite difficult to find (none are currently rated below B, and some are rated A+), the ones we most often see are those documented in the Design section of the *Catalog of United States Perfins*. These patterns consist of a set of 9 or 12 square hole patterns, with some holes deliberately missing. The patterns are always read from the front of the stamp. The pattern is described and listed by the identification of the pins in the squares that are missing.

When found, these difficult philatelic items are most

often seen on the 1 and 2 cent early Franklin-Washington head series. Two examples on the 4 cent denomination are shown here.

The items displayed at the St. Louis Convention included even more remarkable and unusual of these difficult to obtain philatelic items. For instance, Schermack stamps are shown with commercial perfin patterns instead of the square design patterns. And, three Schermack precancelled perfins (prepers) were displayed. One of the 4 cent items displayed includes the paste-up of two coil strips.

Up until this point, the discussion and displays have focused on the Schermack coil stamps with their distinctive rectangular perforations. Other private perforations were used by other companies as is documented in *Scott's Specialized*; two perfins from the Mailometer Company with examples of different private perforations are shown – one with the design perfin pattern that we often refer to as “a Schermack” and the other with a commercial perfin pattern. The authenticity of the private perforations on this second commercial perfin pattern have been questioned by some collectors.

As always, I would enjoy hearing from anyone regarding perfins that they own on Schermacks. All comments are most welcome. My contact information is on page 2 of this *Bulletin*.

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## Fascinating and Unusual United States Perfins

### Introduction to Schermacks with Perfins

From 1906 through 1926, the Post Office Department issued imperforate sheets of 400 stamps of some issues which were then sold to private firms who manufactured vending and affixing machines. These firms cut the imperforate sheets into coil strips and pasted the now-coil strips together. Then they punched their private perforations and, at times, perfins for clients, into these coil strips. One of the more well-known companies was the Schermack Company of Detroit, Michigan. The perforations used by this company were distinctive rectangle slots. Different perfin patterns were constructed by removing various pins from either a 9 hole pin grid pattern or a 12 hole pin square pattern. These Schermack 'coil' stamps and associated Schermack 'coil' perfins are very desirable items, most known to exist in only a few copies and almost all are rated A or A+.

Virtually all known Schermack perfins are on the one and two cent issues. Shown here are two Schermack perfins on the more difficult to find 4 cent Scott 346, the first with a 9 hole pattern and the second with a 12 hole pattern. The second stamp is also an example of one side of a "pasted-up" pair.

Perfin Design 90-1

B+ Rated



Spencer Trask & Company

Documented usage  
from 1908 to 1912

Perfin Design 91.1

A rated



(user unknown)

Documented usage  
in 1908

## Fascinating and Unusual United States Perfins

### Variations of Perfins on Schermacks

Schermack perfins are almost always found on early Washington-Franklin head issues, that is, Scott issues 343 to 347, 383, 384, 408 and 409. As shown on the previous pages, these are known to exist, although in quite limited quantities, with the perfin designs referred to as Schermack perfins. Three remarkable variations of this structure are shown on this page.

First, a Schermack perfin pattern on a Schermack coil, but on Scott issue 320a, the 1906 2 cent lake type II imperforate issue. This stamp with the perfin was discussed in the June 25, 2001 issue of Linn's as being unique. The stamp shown here is the second known copy.



Perfin Des 90-5

Hill Publishing Company

Secondly, a coil strip example of commercial perfin patterns being included on a Schermack coil is shown. To the best of my knowledge, this is a unique item.

Perfin S234  
Southern Pacific  
Steamship Lines



Documented  
usage from  
1914 to 1963

Finally, and probably most remarkably, we show three examples of Schermack coils with commercial perfins and precancels!

Perfin B15A

Burroughs  
Adding  
Machine  
Company



Perfin C46

Beckley  
Ralston  
Company



Perfin D92

Devoe &  
Reynolds  
Company



## Fascinating and Unusual United States Perfins

### Perfins on Stamps of Other Vending Machine Companies

Even far less common than the Schermack perfins are perfins on coil stamps manufactured by other vending machine manufacturers. Two examples are shown here.

The first example is a perforation pattern used by Mailometer Company, the successor to the Schermack Company. The coil stamp shown here is Schermack perfin design 90-25, rated A and used by Third National Bank in St Louis from 1908 to 1912



The second example is a vending machine perforation pattern unknown to me and not listed in Scott's Specialized Catalog. It includes one of the commercial perfin pattern used by the Louisville and Nashville Railroad Company.

